



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

good deed both in facilitating the studies of the gentle reader and in providing for his own future quiet by making these expurgations, so that students may hereafter be spared the annoyance they feel at being deprived of their books if they will only be satisfied on seeing expurgated copies, instead of their old uncorrected editions. Expurgations in a book already printed were made by carefully erasing the offending part in such a manner that it should be quite illegible. But the chief use of these indexes would be in the reprinting of old books; as care would then be taken that the sentences objected to should not appear in the new edition.

Now, the readers will soon guess at one important difference in the practical use of expurgatory and prohibitory indexes. The prohibitory index was, as we have said, public: There has never been any secrecy about it, that man might be able to know what they were to avoid; but would it answer if the expurgatory indexes were equally public? Why, a moment's reflection will show that in this case the remedy would be worse than the disease. You want to preserve the incautious reader from the danger of being corrupted by objectionable passages, in the works of otherwise sound authors; but if you were yourself to make a collection of all these objectionable passages out of different writers, and circulate them in a single volume, your volume would contain the concentrated essence of all the poison that could be found in the authors you were expurgating, and would, therefore, be a more dangerous book than all these put together. Accordingly, secrecy has been a way the rule with the Roman Catholic publishers of expurgatory indexes; while, on the other hand, Protestants, when they can lay hold on these volumes, have been glad to circulate them or reprint them; because they afford a *compendious index* to what can be found in several approved authors, distasteful to modern Romanists. They have also been used to show the contrariety between modern Roman Catholic doctrines and the sentiments of Scripture and the fathers; since we find in the indexes directions to blot out such sentences as these—"God only is to be worshipped;" "Sins are remitted through believing

is to be worshipped;" "Sins are remitted through believing on Christ;" "He that believeth on Christ shall not die eternally;" "God forbids images to be made, that we should adore and bow down before them;" Christ is our righteousness;" "They that believe shall enter into rest;" &c. &c. In the hope to prevent such a use being made of the expurgatory indexes, the strictest injunctions were issued to keep secret the first volumes of the kind that were published. Thus, at the commencement of the first, or Belgic Index, it is directed by the order and decree of the Duke of Alva that no one, except the King's chief printer, should print this index, and that neither he nor any one else should sell it, either publicly or privately, or keep it without the permission of the ordinaries. Moreover, in the diploma of Philip II. it is provided that the index is not to be made, printed, or distributed only to the examiners appointed in every town, the ecclesiastics, prelates, and others who shall be appointed to this office; that the aforesaid prelates in every town where booksellers dwell shall select one or two whom they shall judge to be diligent and faithful, who shall keep the Index Expurgatorius strictly private—shall not show it to others, nor give a copy to any one; but only take care by the help of it to correct and expunge the books mentioned in it, and bring them corrected to some ecclesiastical censor, who shall sign and approve them. On another page we find, in capital letters, the decree "that no one shall add to or take from this index, and that no one shall print it without the authority of the governor and council." All these precautions proved ineffectual; for Protestants got hold of this very index and reprinted it in less than twenty years after. But enough has been produced to show that secrecy was aimed at, and, in fact, since secrecy has been found impossible, the issuing expurgatory indexes has been discontinued. What was intended was that the purchaser of a volume published by a bookseller acting under the directions of the index should have no grounds for supposing that he was not reading the genuine, unaltered sentiments of the writer of the volume. What is regarded as the only important point is, that the people should get enlightening matter to read: that they should know what the authors of the books they read meant to say is considered as no way necessary.

Now that we have fully explained the principles of modern Humanism, as to the prohibition and expurgation of books, we come to the application of them to the subject we have in hand—namely, the writings of the fathers. Here we not gronads to suspect that those who are so careful that no heretical or offensive matter should be circulated, and so indifferent to the consideration whether they are doing justice to their authors, might not be equally unscrupulously with matters offensive, or apparently heretical, when occurring in the writings of a father. Surely, if doctrine be bad, the greater the name, and the higher the antiquity of the book it is found in, the more harm it

\* The curious reader will find an interesting illustration of the dis-  
agreement which an author may thus receive in the works of the  
Jesuit, *they said*. These were at first prohibited, but afterwards  
allowed by the Congregation of the Index to be printed, on receiving  
the corrections which they suggested. After Raymond's death, an ad-  
ditional volume was printed by his friends, containing all the ex-  
positions, and it is amusing to find how in some instances the poor  
author is made to say directly the contrary of what he wanted to say;  
in another, how some pieces of curious matter are struck out, and the  
author is compelled to say, *I would add some more to the same*  
effect which I *carefully* (*I* omit).

is likely to do. Those who interfere to check the circulation of erroneous opinions, though contained in the writings of an author of but little weight or influence, ought surely, in consistency, to interfere still more anxiously if the same opinions were circulated under the authority of St. Chrysostom, or any other venerable father of the Church.

And we can prove that these principles have been extended in their application to cases such as those to which we refer. Thus, *Proverbios* (cited by James on the Corruption of the Fathers) says: "We must take as great care as may be in the libraries of princes or others, that we do not suffer every one to stand poring and prying into those manuscript books, whether Latin, Greek, or written in any other language which are not by the Church permitted to be read. **FOR THESE ALSO MUST BE PURGED.**" And whereas it might be objected that it would be impossible to purge all the manu-scripts in all the libraries in the world, he shows a very short way in which it can be done. "If every man would take the pains to purge his own manu-scripts, and sweep, as it were, before his own door, as men do in great cities when they are to entertain the prince upon a short warning." Further, it will appear how little the name of a *father* would scare a man of these principles from making needful correction when the doctrine taught was opposed to that of the modern Church of Rome. Thus the Jesuit Gretser says: "In prohibiting *Bertram*, I deny that we prohibit a *father*. For he is called a *father* of the Church who feeds it with salutary doctrine; who, being set over the Lord's household, gives it its portion of food in due season. But if now, instead of the food of salutary doctrine, he offer tares and darnel, and the briers and thistles of perverse doctrines, then he is not a *father*, but a *steplasher*; not a *doctor*, but a *seductor*." By this rule, when any writers, however ancient, teach doctrines in opposition to the Church of Rome, they must submit for correction to *their father* the Pope, of whom the same Jesuit asserts that in correcting their books he is doing a work of real mercy and pity to his *sons*.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that one of the rules of the Index, Rule III., directs that in the works of Catholic writers *who lived since the year 1515* correction shall be made where necessary, if possible by the addition or suppression of a few words, or if not, by the erasure of the entire passage. And Rule IV. directs that in the works of *ancient* Catholics nothing is to be changed, except where manifest error has crept in through the fraud of heretics, or the carelessness of printers. It would seem, then, that the works of fathers are exempt from correction, though a loop-hole is left for so-called corrections under the pretence that heretics had corrupted the original. Prudence would manifestly warn modern Romanists against attempting to erase sentences from the works of the fathers, unless they could be sure to escape detection; for an unsuccessful attempt would only show to their opponents an acknowledged opposition between the sentiments of primitive Christians and those of the modern Church of Rome. In the Belgic Index, under the head of Bertram, the divines of Douay give excellent reasons why it is more wise to get rid of a troublesome passage from an ancient writer in some other way than by a simple prohibition: "Since, in other ancient Catholic writers, we bear very many errors, and extenuate them or excuse them, or by inventing a device, often destroy them, and frame a convenient sense for them, when they are opposed to us in disputation with adversaries, we do not see why Bertram may not merit the same indulgence, lest heretics should prate that we burn and prohibit antiquity when it makes for them."

Notwithstanding the wisdom of this rule, the censors have not been always wise enough to keep their hands off the fathers. For instance, in Qnirogn's Index, the first edition of De La Bigne's Library of the Fathers is freely censured. The reader will find many curious particulars in Mr. Gibbons's Preface; and as Mr. Gibbons notices, the copy of De La Bigne in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, has been corrected accordingly, the condemned places being either erased with ink, or having paper pasted over them, or else being torn out altogether.

But the field on which the expurgatory indexes labour most strenuously is the indexes to the writings of the fathers. The fathers, they feel, often say inconvenient things, which might better have been left unsaid, but which cannot well be blotted out. Well, at least, say they, we will not give facilities to any one for finding such passages. They will do no harm if no one knows they are there. We shall hereafter give several exam-

plies how the very words of a father, which are allowed to pass in the text, are unsparingly condemned in the index.

But what we are concerned with here is to trace the principles which have directed the authorities of the Church of Rome. And it is quite plain that they feel that it is the paramount duty of an editor to avoid circulating that which may countenance error and heresy, and that in comparison of this, the duty of faithfully reproducing the author's text is one which must not, for a moment, stand in the way. Nor can we imagine, for a moment, that this tone of feeling never existed before the year 1564, when the Tridentine Rules of the Index were published. On the contrary, what we believe was new then was the arbitrary limitation of the application of these principles to authors who lived before the year 1515; in other words, to Catholic authors who lived since the rise of Lutheranism, and who might be expected, on that account, to express themselves with more caution on all disputed points than those who lived before these controversies arose, and who, therefore, might be supposed to stand least in need of correction. Is there, then, any reason to think that transcribers of manuscripts, or others, who lived before this rule, about the year 1515, was made, would feel themselves limited by any such restriction? Would they be not likely to carry out, in their full extent, the same principles which animated the compilers of the expurgatory indexes? We believe that the compilers of these indexes only reduced to a system principles which had been in operation long before. We must, however, postpone to another article some illustrations of the way in which these principles were carried out, and how fathers have not been allowed to say what they wanted to say.

## ECCLESIASTICAL MIRACLES.

THE subject of the miraculous powers claimed by the Church of Rome is one to which we have frequently referred in our pages; and we have devoted no small time and space to the exposure of some modern impostures which have been dignified with the name of miracles. We propose, now, in continuation of our former remarks, to consider the whole question under a more general point of view, and to inquire whether there be any and what reasons for maintaining that the age of miracle has never come to an end, and that, consequently, miraculous agency is one of the permanent characteristics of the Christian Church.

We commence, then, by remarking that the various opinions held by divines relative to the cessation of miraculous agency in the Christian Church may be reduced to three.

1. It is held that miraculous agency has never ceased from the time of our blessed Saviour to the present day; nay, more, that the power of working miracles has never been withdrawn from the Church, but inheres in and has been actually exercised by it in all ages down to the present time. This is the opinion of the divines of the Church of Rome. Bellarmine reckons this miraculous power among the Notes of the Church.

2. It is contended that miracles wholly ceased as soon as the last of the Apostles was withdrawn from the world.

3. It is maintained, as a middle course between these two extremes, that miracles became less frequent after the apostolic age, till they gradually died away altogether. Those who agree in this last opinion differ, however, from each other as to the lowest date which they are willing to assign to this total cessation. Some, assuming that the power of working miracles was limited to those on whom the Apostles themselves conferred it, fix on the middle of the second century as the period of the cessation, because then the last of these individuals probably ceased to live. Others prefer a somewhat later date.

Our immediate object being simply to consider the grounds on which the first of these three opinions—that of Romanists—has been attempted to be maintained, we shall, accordingly, take no further notice at present of the others.

The ablest defence of ecclesiastical miracles which has hitherto appeared is that by Dr. Newman, prefixed to his translation of Fleury's Ecclesiastical History. It was written before he openly joined the Romish communion. And it is a very striking fact that the best refutation of this elaborate Essay is to be found in another admirable Essay, by the same author, on "The Miracles of Scripture," published originally in the Encyclopaedia Metropolitana.

published originally in the *Eccl. in the Metropolitana*. Dr. Newman's proof of the continued existence of miraculous powers in the Church consists of three parts. He endeavours to show, *First*—That there is no antecedent improbability against it; but, on the contrary, an antecedent probability. *Secondly*—That the continued possession of miraculous power by the Church is involved in the general promises made to her by our Lord; and, moreover, is explicitly declared by Him and by St. Paul to be one of the Church's Notes. *Thirdly*—That there is positive testimony in proof of such miraculous powers, having been actually exercised in all ages.

"In like manner, Bellarmine, on one occasion, when pressed by the authority of certain Fathers, says, 'Papam patet non habere in ecclesia sed filios omnes.' The Pope acknowledges no father in the Church; for they are all his sons.—De Sacra Parte, lib. ii., cap. 22, sub. fin.

"Those readers who have access to that library will find the volume by the author, M. G. L. 6, v. 2. Good specimens of separate parts will be found, vol. 2, p. 441, vol. 3, p. 44, vol. 4, p. 404, &c. &c. It will be found that the author has carefully avoided the accusations directed in Quir. 99's Index, N. f. 37. The certificate of interpretation is on the back of the title-page of vol. 4, dated June 1, 1688.—1688.—On the date of the index, as that must time was not.

"Cum in Catechisate veteris eti (plurimis) letarum et errorum et  
extenuacione, praeterea, exhortante commento per se apergente et  
commandante, et non alterante, dum operatur in dispensatione  
sue, non in confirmatione omnis doctrinam, non credimus cum  
exclusione confirmationis diligenter reservare videtur, ut heretici  
habet etiam rationes non antiquissimas pro ipsius fiduciam etiam  
proprobemus.

\* The title of this remarkable apology is, "An Essay on the Missionaries recorded in Ecclesiastical History."

more advantageously circumstanced than those of Scripture; insomuch as the latter are events without a parallel, which is not the case with the former, because they follow upon Apostolic miracles. They may, therefore, be referred to the same Almighty cause as their author, and may be regarded as forming the continuation of an already established system. To the same effect he remarks (p. xxii.), that as the ordinary Providence of God is conducted upon a system, so is it more probable than not that there is a law of supernatural manifestations; and thus the occurrence of miracles during the age of Christ and His Apostles is a presumption in favour of their recurrence afterwards. He adds (p. lxxi.), that the miracles of Scripture are a far greater innovation upon the economy of nature than the miracles of the Church are upon the economy of Scripture.

In support of his second proposition, Dr. Newman refers to the various passages of Scripture in which the abiding presence of Deity in the Church is spoken of; e.g., Ezek. xxviii. 27: "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Matt. xxvii. 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." John xiv. 16: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." From such passages as these he derives the general conclusion (which we, of course, admit) that Christianity, like Judaism, is an extraordinary dispensation, and that the Church is a supernatural ordinance; and he infers (which we deny) that it is, consequently, possessed also of supernatural powers. He further adduces the express testimony of our Lord and of St. Paul, to the effect that miracles were to be a Note of the Church. Our Lord's testimony he holds to be contained in the well-known passage, Mark. xvi. 17, 18. He finds St. Paul's in those statements, wherein miracles are mentioned as proofs of the impartation of the promised Comforter (e.g., Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 10).

In support of the third and last proposition, Dr. Newman proceeds to an examination of the evidence adduced for particular alleged ecclesiastical miracles. He fairly warns us, however, beforehand (p. cv.), that an inquirer should not enter on this part of the subject "without being prepared for fiction and exaggeration in the narrative to an indefinite extent."

With respect to the assertion that there is a less antecedent improbability against Church miracles than against those of Scripture, because the former are merely the continuation of an already established system, it is obvious that this inference involves the very important assumption that the Church miracles are the continuation of an established system; are entitled to be regarded as parts of the same series with those of Scripture, or, at least, as constituting a new series connected with the other. In other words, it is assumed that there are the same or equally important final causes, deduced from what we know of the providential government and moral attributes of God, for admitting the probability of the second set of supernatural facts as there are for admitting that of the first set, prior to the positive evidence for either; and that, in each case, equally powerful considerations may be adduced to overcome the antecedent improbability which lies against all miracles, as interruptions of the ordinary visible course of nature. It is assumed, in short, that an end equally worthy, or, at least, worthy in itself, of an All-wise Author is perceptible in the one case as clearly as in the other.

Now, let us hear what Dr. Newman himself says upon this head. He is forced to admit (pp. xiii. xvi.) that miracles posterior to the Apostolic age are, upon the whole, very different in spirit, circumstances, and nature, as well as in evidence, from those of Scripture upon the whole, so that the oneseries or family ought never to be confounded with the other. He quotes (p. xxviii.) passages from the Fathers to prove that miracles like those of the Apostles, whether in their object, cogency, impressiveness, or character, were no longer of occurrence in the Church. He tells us (p. xxiv.) that Scripture miracles are for the most part evidences of a divine revelation, and that for the sake of those who have not yet been instructed in it; and, further, in order to the instruction of multitudes; while the miracles which follow have sometimes no discoverable direct object, or but a slight object. They happen, he adds, for the sake of individuals, and of those who are already Christians, or for purposes already effected, as far as we can judge, by the miracles of Scripture. The Scripture miracles, he goes on to say, are wrought by persons consciously exercising, under Divine guidance, a power committed to them for definite ends; professing to be immediate messengers from heaven, and to be evidencing their mission by their miracles: whereas ecclesiastical miracles are not so much wrought as displayed, being effected by Divine power, without any visible media of operation at all, or by inanimate or material media, as relics and shrines, or by instruments who did not know at the time what they were effecting. We find the gift, he proceeds, often committed (to use the words of C. Middleton), "not to the successors of the Apostles, to the Bishops, the Martyrs, or the principal champions of the Christian cause; but to boys, to women, and, above all, to private and obscure laymen, not only of an inferior, but sometimes also of a bad character." The miracles of Scripture, he con-

tinues, are, as a whole, simple and majestic; those of ecclesiastical history often parts of what may not unfitly be called a romantic character, and of that wildness and inequality which enters into the notion of romance. The miracles of Scripture are undeniably of a supernatural character; those of ecclesiastical history are often scarcely more than extraordinary accidents or coincidences, or events which seem to betray exaggerations or errors in the statement. In ecclesiastical history true and false miracles are mixed; whereas in Scripture inspiration has selected the true to the exclusion of all others.

Had the above description of ecclesiastical miracles, as compared with those of Scripture, been placed before our readers, without their being made aware of the source from which it is taken, they would, doubtless, conclude that it emanated from some violent opponent of the Church of Rome. But, as we have said, it is taken, and verbatim, from Dr. Newman himself. And, however much we may admire his candour in drawing such a picture, we must wonder still more at the coolness with which he requires us to assent to the position that such miracles as the above are a continuation of the miraculous series commenced by Christ and His Apostles, and recorded in Scripture; and that there is a greater *a priori* improbability against the miracles of Scripture than against these! Upon the one side we have a union of all the characters with which a miracle ought to be invested, according to our best and highest notions of God; upon the other, we have a combination of all the circumstances which can throw discredit on an alleged miraculous interference; and which are actually enumerated as such by Dr. Newman himself in the other Work above referred to. And yet, we are asked to believe that both sets of miracles are part and parcel of the same system; the latter set being even more credible than the former!

But it will naturally be asked, does not Dr. Newman attempt to reconcile this remarkable difference between the two classes of Miracles with his assertion that the later ones are antecedently as credible, or even more so, than those recorded in Scripture? He does make the attempt. He tells us that as the ordinary Providence of God is conducted upon a system, so it is more probable than not that there is also a law of supernatural manifestations; and that, since every system consists of parts, varying in importance and value, so also, as regards a dispensation of Miracles, the same variety may be expected. (p. xxii.) That as one description of Miracles may be necessary for evidence—viz., such as are at once majestic and undeniable; so, for those other and manifold objects which the economy of the Gospel kingdom may involve, a more hidden and intricate path, a more complex exhibition, a more exuberant method, a more versatile rule, may be essential. (p. 1.) That miraculous agency, when once introduced for greater ends, may be made subservient to secondary ones. (p. xxi.) And that, consequently, not only is the want of uniformity between the Apostolic and Ecclesiastical Miracles what we might undoubtedly antecedently expect, but the very inferiority of the latter may be the very reason which admits of their belonging to the same system as the former. (p. 1.) As to our not being able to discover what we deem sufficiently important ends brought about by miraculous agency of the latter kinds, Dr. Newman reminds us (p. xx.) of the wise caution of Bishop Douglas (in his Criterion)—"Though we may be certain that God will never reverse the course of nature but for important ends; infinite wisdom may see ends highly worthy of a miraculous interposition, the importance of which lies hid from our shallow comprehension."

Such is a fair statement of Dr. Newman's arguments in support of the paradox which he had to maintain.

The answer to his plausible sophistry is sufficiently obvious. It is perfectly true, as he says, that a large system consists of a great variety of parts, differing in excellence and dignity, the lesser ones being, notwithstanding, essential, in their own degree, to the completeness and harmony of the whole. It is equally undeniable that what was originally intended for some highly important end may also subserve what appears to be some very inferior purpose. Thus, to use a happy illustration of a modern writer upon miracles, "It would be highly ridiculous to erect a steam-engine for the mere purpose of opening and shutting a valve; but the engine being once erected, it is very wisely employed both for this and for many other purposes, which, comparatively speaking, are of very little importance." It is further true, that to a person either unacquainted with all the ends designed by the system, or not understanding the mode of operation, or the connection of one or more of the parts with the rest, some of these parts may appear to be objectless, or even to oppose some other parts. All this is perfectly true, and may be very usefully applied to some of the Scripture miracles themselves. But before we can apply it to the later miracles, we must answer the question, Whether it be more probable that a series of alleged miracles, described, as above, by Dr. Newman himself, and also characterized by him in his other essay as "more or less unaccountable, unmeaning, extravagant, or useless," and, it may be added, some of them bearing indubitable marks of fraud and folly, and, consequently,

unlike all that we know of the Divine procedure, either in the natural or moral world—form part of the same system with the miracles of Scripture, which are, as Dr. Newman well observes, "ascribed to an adequate cause, recommended by an intrinsic dignity, and connected with an important object: grave, simple, unambiguous, majestic, benevolent, and merciful;" or that the alleged miracles are only counterfeit imitations of the genuine ones, got up as pious frauds, either for the purpose of commanding and advancing the cause of the Gospel amongst the heathen, or with the less pardonable object of promoting the gain, credit, power, or other temporal advantages of some sections or parties in the Church itself. This is the preliminary question, which we must resolve before we can carry over to the credit of ecclesiastical miracles the admitted truths above noticed. To help us in resolving this question, we must remember that in the use of Scripture miracles there is an entire absence of prodigality. They are not sown broadcast over the history of God's dealings with His people. They are ultimate resources, reserved for the great exigencies of His kingdom; not incidents of daily occurrence. They are not cheap, off-hand expedients, which may always be appealed to, but come only into play when nothing else would have supplied their place. In the thaumaturgy of Church History, there is a wasteful expenditure of miracles. No perplexity, ever so trifling, occurs which a miracle is not brought to solve. The Deus ex Machina is ever at hand. Almost every Saint has his catalogue of miracles. National Saints rival each other in miraculous achievements, and they are all rivals of Christ and His apostles.

But should it appear that there are instances of alleged miraculous agency which baffle our attempts at explaining them on any known or conceivable physical principles; and which, consequently, seem to be, so far as we can judge, real interferences with the established order of things, the further very grave question arises, Whether, from what we know of the drift and ulterior consequences of such miracles, on the whole—their tendencies to corrupt the religious sentiments of mankind, to confirm idolatrous practices, to dispose men to the worship of subordinate divinities, "to sanction doctrines opposed not only to scriptural truth, but to the light of nature, e.g., Monachism"—we should not rather attribute such miracles to Satanic agency, and look upon them as some of the lying wonders of which Scripture speaks, rather than presume to class them amongst the extraordinary agencies of the God of Truth.

But though we were to admit, for the sake of argument, that the miracles of ecclesiastical history are not more improbable, or are even less so, than those of Scripture, prior to the proof of either, still the great question would remain—Is the direct evidence for both systems equally satisfactory? Or, without going so far as this, Is the direct evidence on which ecclesiastical miracles rest sufficiently strong to induce us to believe them? We are again content to let Dr. Newman answer this question for us. He says, in the Essay now under consideration (p. 25), "The miracles of Scripture are definite and whole transactions, drawn out and carried through from first to last, with beginning and ending, clear, complete, and compact in the narrative, separated from extraneous matter, and consigned to authentic statements. Whereas, the ecclesiastical miracles, for the most part, are not contained in any authenticated form or original document; at least, they need to be extracted from merely historical works, and often are only floating rumours, popular traditions, vague, various, inconsistent in detail, tales which only happen to have survived, or which in the course of years obtained a permanent place in local usages or in particular rites, or in certain spots, recorded at a distance from the time and country when and where they profess to have occurred, and brought into shape only by the juxtaposition of distinct informants." Or, as he more concisely states the matter in a passage already quoted, "An inquirer should not enter upon the subject of the miracles reported or alleged in ecclesiastical history without being prepared for fiction and exaggeration in the narration to an indefinite extent."

When to this, the admitted character of the evidence for ecclesiastical miracles, we add all the other causes, connected with the honesty or competence of the witnesses, which tend to invalidate the testimony for those miracles, considered upon the whole and as a system;—such as desire of gain, power, or other temporal advantages; party spirit or individual rivalry; the shame of retracting what has once been asserted; the previous character for falsehood which attaches to some of the witnesses; inconsistencies, prevarications, marks of unfairness, and suppression of particulars; hearsay evidence; want of sufficient examination; prejudice in favour of a system already established; enthusiasm, ignorance, or habitual credulity; the influence of authority, and such like motives—when we take all these things into account, and bear in mind, at the same time, the general character of the alleged miracles themselves (as above described by Dr. Newman), which this suspicious testimony is adduced to uphold, we not only consider ourselves justified in withholding our assent to them as a system, but we feel ourselves compelled to regard them upon the

whole as a monstrous combination of self-delusion and designing imposture. Instead of believing them to be a continuation of the system of miracles recorded in Scripture, we view them as merely another illustration of the aphorism, that "Fiction and pretence follow truth as its shadows."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All letters meant for publication should be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-street, and the real name and address given, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for good faith.

We earnestly request our correspondents, both Protestants and Roman Catholics, to limit the length of their communications, when possible, and not in any case to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber.

The CATHOLIC LAYMAN is registered for transmission beyond the United Kingdom.

## The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, APRIL 15, 1858.

A PUBLIC journalist has his trials and distresses, for which, perhaps, no man in this world meets with so little sympathy. The journalist must never be ill, never tired, never out of spirits; no family affliction must take him from his "leading article;" no exhaustion can entitle him to rest; above all, he must never complain when those who read his paper, and benefit by his exertions, forget to pay their subscriptions, even though undertaken to be paid in advance.

Journalism has other trials beyond this. The journalist must get up the steam, and sometimes the water will not boil. Roman Catholic journalists in Ireland are at present suffering under a severe trial of their faith and patience. The scribe may lash himself into a fury about the "woes, wrongs, and sufferings" of Irish Roman Catholics, but the people can no longer be got to believe in the "woes, wrongs, and sufferings" which they are told oppress them.

We do not remember to have met any more touching or pathetic statement of the trials of a journalist than appear in the leading article of the *Tablet* of March 27, 1858. We think it worthy of being recorded.

Personally, the Catholic journalist has less to complain of, at the hands of his Protestant fellow-subjects, than most people. What injuries he does sustain are all inflicted by his co-religionists. The grievances which rouse his wrath, the woes, wrongs, and sufferings which provoke his indignation, the blunders, treasons, and crimes which call forth his denunciations, are no personal concern of his. Why is he vicariously excited when the supposed sufferers are all serene? There are 40 bishops, 12 peers, 4,000 priests, and from 30 to 40 members of Parliament, with 7,000,000 of souls. Is not their cheerful placidity a sufficient proof that the grievances which he talks of exist only in his own imagination? We are tempted to turn optimists, and to hold that all that is is right.

"The children of Catholic soldiers are sent to Protestant schools; but, if it were not good for them, would the Catholic bishops, peers, priests, members of Parliament, and public take the thing so coolly?

"Catholic soldiers and sailors die in the service of their country, without the ministrations of a priest, and without the aid of the sacraments; but, if this state of things were disapproved of, would it be left for you—you poor scribe—to object to it?

"Catholic Ireland is charged with the maintenance of a Protestant Establishment; but, if Catholic Ireland thought it an unpleasant burthen, would not Catholic Ireland take some steps to get rid of it? A Catholic journalist is supposed to defend the honour and character of the Catholic body: an enlightened sense of his functions may, perhaps, lead him to deny the existence of any grievances, lest by admitting their reality he should become the accuser of his brethren, and bear witness to their supineness and cowardice."

That the "Catholic journalist," burning with wrath and indignation, real or assumed, for "the woes, wrongs, and sufferings" of Irish Roman Catholics, should have his generous indignation still further excited by the lamentable

fact that "the supposed sufferers are all serene," and cannot be persuaded, any more than Canning's "needy knife-grinder," that as Catholics they have any "woes, wrongs, or sufferings," is a new state of things in Ireland, indicating a changed state of society, which appears to us most favourable for a calm and kindly discussion of religious truth.

With the most brotherly sympathy for the disappointed feelings of our brother journalist, we must still take this article as evidence of a striking and rapid change in the state of the Irish mind; as great, perhaps, as ever took place in any nation, in so short a time.

Within a quarter of a century a change of ministry was sufficient to convulse Ireland with strife between religious parties. We now see such a change wholly unattended with any such effect. We remember when a cry got up by newspaper writers of the "wrongs of Catholics" was sufficient to rouse the people to a state of fury, in which the voice of truth or reason could not be heard, and which rendered any government, or any social improvement, almost impossible. But we have now lived to see the Editor of the *Tablet*, the ablest political writer, perhaps, among Roman Catholics in Ireland, lamenting over the impossibility of persuading Irish Roman Catholics that they have any wrongs to be redressed.

As a sign and symptom of great social change, and as a precursor of still greater religious change, we think this touching lamentation is one of the most important confessions we have read.

Great reasons there must be for so great a change; and those reasons are worthy of being studied by Irishmen.

Ireland has passed through the furnace of affliction. Those who perished in the famine and the pestilence were still in the hands of Him whose tender mercies are over all His works. To us who remain, God, in His mercy, has restored the years that the famine had destroyed (Joel ii. 25). God's temporal blessings make nations less attentive to imaginary grievances.

Yet this is far from being a full account of the great change which has passed over the Irish mind in a few short years.

For centuries after the Reformation in Ireland (and before it, too) there had been wrongs and grievances on both sides. The hand of God Himself could alone allay the passions of those burning recollections. We revert to them now, only to rejoice over their extinction.

Political and religious strife in Ireland arose from inherent causes in the national history.

At the Reformation in Ireland the Pope took advantage of hostilities of race. He found the majority of the Irish disinclined to English dominion. He pronounced the Queen of England dethroned by his apostolical authority, and proclaimed the rewards of the champions of the Crusades to all who would exterminate the heretic English. He added foreign war to civil war. He made a present of Ireland to the King of Spain, and stirred up a Spanish invasion of Ireland. He appointed as the first *Roman Catholic* bishops of Ireland the military and political agents of the King of Spain in that invasion. Thus religion was turned into treason; and then the penalties of treason came to be denounced against religion itself. This was the origin of "the penal laws."

We write not either to condemn or to justify either party in this conflict, but only to learn and to enforce a lesson, how the discussion of religious truth should be conducted in Ireland.

We cannot justify the dethronement of a lawful sovereign, the incitement to rebellion, the stirring up of war, to serve the purposes and support the usurped authority of a foreign

bishop. As little can we justify the maintenance of penalties against religious belief when the necessity which alone could excuse such penalties had passed away. The *occasion* of the penal laws, the *existence* and the *continuance* of the penal laws, were all alike hostile to the cause of truth in Ireland; for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

We do not enter into the question how far a civil government may or ought to go in selecting as rulers or legislators those whose religious conviction leads to the highest views of the responsibility of human power to God who gives it. But, looking at the practical case as it exists in Ireland, we hold that it is necessary to get rid of human strife and party conflicts, in order that truth may be discussed without prejudice or passion. We hold that Roman Catholics, as citizens, should stand on an equal footing with Protestants, and should have equal opportunities to work out their own position, political and social, without let or hindrance. We believe that the avowal and the maintenance of this principle is essential to the right conduct of religious discussion in Ireland.

Looking back to our own recollections of the social and political condition of Ireland, we rejoice to see that great progress has been made towards this new state of things.

Reverting now to the "woes, wrongs, and sufferings" which rouse to indignation the journalist of the *Tablet*, and all the more because he cannot get Irish Roman Catholics to believe in their reality, we find that his first grievance is the expected attendance of the children of Roman Catholic soldiers at regimental schools.

But we find in *another* leading article, in the very same number of the *Tablet*, the following admission of the editor about these schools:—"The child of any Catholic or disporter from the Church of England may be absent from school during the time when what is called religious instruction is given, if its parent signifies his wish to that effect, in writing, to the schoolmaster or mistress; and the so-called instruction is given at the *beginning* of the day." That regimental schools are thus conducted on the principles of the "national system" in Ireland is, perhaps, the reason why the Roman Catholic public "take the thing so coolly," and why the editor of the *Tablet* finds it so impossible to persuade Roman Catholics that there is any grievance in the matter.

That Roman Catholics cannot be persuaded that there is any real grievance in the non-appointment of Roman Catholic chaplains is, perhaps, accounted for by the fact, that a Protestant government, reviled on all occasions by the Church of Rome, has gone to the extreme of liberality in appointing Roman Catholic chaplains to gaols, workhouses, the army, and the colonies. We are not expressing any opinion here on principles, but only dealing with facts. What are the facts on the other side? Did the Pope ever appoint or permit any Protestant chaplains in the Roman States for those of his *temporal* subjects who were Protestants on principle? We rather think not. The difference is worthy of being considered by Roman Catholics in these countries. "Do as you would that others should do unto you," says our blessed Lord. We plead guilty to some weakness of feeling even towards an exaggerated application of this glorious maxim. Let Roman Catholics consider which performs it best—their own Protestant government, or their own Pope.

The third "grievance" upon which the "poor scribe" can get up no wrath among Irish Roman Catholics (which failure, perhaps, arouses his indignation most) is, the Protestant Church in Ireland. There may be reasons for this, too, in late eventful years. The writer of this article, during